

14. AN AMENDMENT TO BE OFFERED BY REPRESENTATIVE  
SCHIFF OF CALIFORNIA, OR  
HIS DESIGNEE, DEBATABLE FOR 10 MINUTES:

37

**AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1950, AS REPORTED  
OFFERED BY MR. SCHIFF OF CALIFORNIA**

At the end of title VII (relating to miscellaneous provisions) insert the following:

1 SEC. 735. SENSE OF CONGRESS CONCERNING THE TIMELY  
2 ISSUANCE OF VISAS FOR RUSSIAN WEAPONS  
3 SCIENTISTS INVOLVED IN ARMS CONTROL  
4 AND NONPROLIFERATION EXCHANGES WITH  
5 THE UNITED STATES.

6 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-  
7 ings:

8 (1) The United States visa approval system has  
9 in the past lacked proper oversight, coordination,  
10 and supervision. A more systematic, stringent, and  
11 rigorous evaluation system for visa approvals is  
12 clearly in the best interests of the United States.

13 (2) Many distinguished scholars, professors, re-  
14 searchers, and foreign associates of United States  
15 national academies have been prevented by visa  
16 delays from entering the United States for engage-  
17 ments at major conferences, meetings, and teaching  
18 invitations at American universities.

19 (3) Research collaborators for United States  
20 laboratories have also been prevented from entering



1 the United States. Their absence halts projects and  
2 compromises United States commitments in long-  
3 standing international cooperative agreements aimed  
4 at reducing stockpiles of weapons of mass destruc-  
5 tion.

6 (4) Visa restrictions came within one day of  
7 forcing the cancellation of an important meeting in  
8 Washington, D.C. of the National Academy of  
9 Sciences Committee on United States Russian Co-  
10 operation on Nuclear Non-Proliferation.

11 (5) Russian weapons scientists involved in nu-  
12 clear non-proliferation cooperative efforts with the  
13 United States are critical to American efforts to en-  
14 sure that nuclear weapons-grade materials remain  
15 under control and out of the hands of terrorists.

16 (6) In a December 2002 statement, the Presi-  
17 dents of the National Academy of Sciences, the Na-  
18 tional Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of  
19 Medicine found that a United States approach to  
20 visas that welcomes qualified foreign scientists, engi-  
21 neers, health professionals, and students serves na-  
22 tional goals in three distinct ways:

23 (A) It harnesses international cooperation  
24 for counterterrorism.



1 (B) It builds stronger allies through sci-  
2 entific and technical cooperation.

3 (C) It maintains United States global lead-  
4 ership in science and technology.

5 (7) The Presidents of the National Academy of  
6 Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and  
7 the Institute of Medicine have found that current  
8 United States policy toward granting visas, to for-  
9 eign scientists is harmful to the United States sci-  
10 entific community and to the longterm well-being of  
11 the United States. They stated on December 13,  
12 2002, that "To make our nation safer, it is ex-  
13 tremely important that our visa policy not only keep  
14 out foreigners who intend to do us harm, but also  
15 facilitate the acceptance of those who bring us con-  
16 siderable benefit. Recent efforts by our government  
17 to constrain the flow of international visitors in the  
18 name of national security are having serious unin-  
19 tended consequences for American science, engineer-  
20 ing, and medicine. The long-term security of the  
21 United States depends on admitting scholars who  
22 benefit our nation. In short, the United States sci-  
23 entific, engineering, and health communities cannot  
24 hope to maintain their present position of inter-  
25 national leadership if they become isolated from the



1 rest of the world. We view this as an urgent matter,  
2 one that must be promptly addressed if the United  
3 States is to meet both its national security and eco-  
4 nomic development goals.”.

5 (8) Currently, consular officials send many visa  
6 applications back to the United States for sequential  
7 security clearances by several agencies, which may  
8 lead to long delays in visa processing. Consular offi-  
9 cers are subject to criminal penalties if they grant  
10 a visa to a person who subsequently commits a ter-  
11 rorist act in the United States. However, there are  
12 currently no incentives for consular officers to facili-  
13 tate scientific exchanges, which may advance the na-  
14 tional interest of the United States.

15 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of the  
16 Congress that—

17 (1) to the extent possible and consistent with  
18 national security objectives, the United States  
19 should expedite the processing of granting visas to  
20 Russian weapons scientists, especially those partici-  
21 pating in bilateral weapon disarmament talks, nego-  
22 tiations, and exchanges, to enable them to partici-  
23 pate in cooperative nonproliferation activities with  
24 their counterparts in the United States, and



1           (2) the Department of State is encouraged to  
2       consider streamlining the process of granting visas  
3       for such scientists as follows:

4           (A) Reinstate a procedure of pre-security  
5       clearance for scientists and engineers with the  
6       proper credentials.

7           (B) Involve the United States scientific  
8       and technical community in determining areas  
9       of particular security concern.

